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A STUDY OF RESULTS OF INSTITUTIONAL CARE

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A PAPER READ BEFORE THE
CHILDREN'S SECTION OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF CHARITIES AND CORRECTION
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, MAY 18, 1915

By WILLIAM J. DOHERTY
SECOND DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC CHARITIES
NEW YORK CITY

PUBLISHED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD-HELPING OF THE
RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION
130 EAST 22ND STREET
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JUNE, 1915

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THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHARITIES AND CORRECTION

The address printed in this pamphlet is one of the 116 delivered at the 47 different sessions of the Forty-Second National Conference of Charities and Correction, which was held at Baltimore for a week in May, 1915. This Conference is an outgrowth of the Social Science Association, and was originally a gathering of the few members of state boards of charities which were in existence in the '70's. Its membership now represents every variety of social service activity, voluntary and governmental, and every shade of religious and social opinion. Anyone interested in its objects is eligible for membership, and all members are entitled to its Bulletins and volumes of Proceedings.

Many of the social reforms now well established in America were first advocated at this Conference, which exists to discuss social problems and disseminate information with regard to them but does not formulate platforms.

The sessions of 1916 will be held at Indianapolis. Annual membership for those who join in 1915, $2.50; after January 1, 1916, $3.00; sustaining membership, $10.00.

Address for further information about publications, membership, program of the next Conference, etc.,

Wm. T. Cross, *General Secretary*,
315 Plymouth Court, Chicago, Ill.

FOREWORD

In response to a general desire to obtain copies as early as possible the Russell Sage Foundation has decided to print three remarkable papers read at the National Conference of Charities and Correction in Baltimore; one by Mr. C. C. Carstens of Boston on "A Community Plan in Children's Work," one by Mr. J. Prentice Murphy of Boston on "A Study of Results of a Child-Placing Society," and one by Mr. William J. Doherty of New York on "A Study of Results of Institutional Care."

Single copy of one pamphlet will be furnished on request; additional copies at five cents each; ten or more copies at three cents each.

A STUDY OF RESULTS OF INSTITUTIONAL CARE

By William J. Doherty,
Second Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Charities, New York City

At the outset it might be well for me to go on record as stating that I am fully aware of the fact that to me has been assigned for discussion a rather difficult and most delicate subject.

Furthermore, experience of the past serves most forcibly to remind me that, in its presentation, almost unwittingly, I shall be compelled to inflict pain upon the finer sensibilities of a large number of devoted men and women who, animated by deeply conscientious motives, have given generously and unselfishly of their time and means to the advancement of the interests of the institutional care of children. Perhaps, in my make-up, had I been possessed of more caution than hardihood, or call it courage or temerity, if you will, I would have hesitated long before consenting finally to accept the assignment which some unknown, but well-minded person, practically thrust upon me.

Harsh and over-critical, as some perchance may see fit to designate me, I do sincerely trust that all, whether or not identified with children's institutions, will believe me when I make the assertion that, in presenting the subject in the form I intend to adopt, I am actuated solely through conscientious motives, with a sincere desire to help the cause and with an impelling ambition to associate myself with any movement which will eventuate in the adoption of better and more progressive standards in our public and private child-caring institutions. In a word, after an experience of fifteen years in handling the output of institutions and one year as a public official in dealing intimately with the methods entering into the conduct of children's institutions, I feel it a duty due the community to exert every influence possible in an endeavor to secure a square deal for a large number of destitute, dependent, and neglected children whom fate or other circumstances over which practically they have no control commits to the care of some of our children's institutions of the present day.

In the treatment of this subject, it occurs to me that two methods are permissible. One method involves a discussion of the topic in a purely theoretical or abstract form in which usually the writer draws upon the general knowledge gathered concerning the commonly accepted theories of the disadvantages of institutional care of children. Where such a course of treatment is adopted it is quite customary to find that, with the very meagre data available for the purpose, an attempt is made to make some sort of prognosis of the results which might be expected naturally to follow.

In so far as my studies have gone, in the past, this, in great measure, has been our method in dealing with the subject. As a result, while partially we may have succeeded in convincing certain members of the community that institutional care of children is not the most approved, the most desirable or the most advan-

tageous method of child-care, the proofs advanced in defence of the argument have lacked that compelling force so essential if we are to convince the public at large. They lacked force because of the fact that they were based, not upon concrete evidence resulting from an extensive and exhaustive study but, quite generally, upon scattered instances or debatable conclusions.

The net result of such method of treatment had been to arouse a spirit of bitter antagonism on the part of the proponents of the system of institutional care of children. Those in favor of the continuance of this form of child-care assert, and with some measure of justification, it would appear, that their opponents base their criticisms and conclusions, not upon concrete facts acquired by actual contact with the problem, but upon general assertions or theories which have no proper basis or foundation. Furthermore they state that usually it is to be found that the most bitter among those who assail institutional methods have had absolutely no experience whatever in dealing with institutional children before or after discharge. Consequently, they argue, such persons are not properly equipped or qualified to pass judgment upon the question.

The other method of treating the subject is to view it in a practical and concrete form, to outline the methods of child-care actually prevailing in certain institutions and then to draw conclusions or make deductions. This, to my mind the more satisfactory and just method of handling the subject, will be adopted in the presentation of this paper.

In any institution, if the methods of child-care adopted are of an acceptable standard, it is quite safe to predict that the results or effects upon the children concerned will measure up to the requirements. On the other hand, if the child-care methods in vogue are indifferent or bad, their effects, necessarily, will exert an indifferent or evil influence upon the future lives of such children unfortunate enough to come within their scope.

Even the most radical opponent of children's institutions, if he has had any opportunity to study the question at close range, will have to admit that there are some exceedingly good institutions working along most progressive lines for the advancement of the temporal and spiritual interests of the dependent children consigned to their care. Speaking for the State of New York, where exceptional opportunities have been afforded me, during the past year, to look closely into things institutional, I can bear cheerful testimony to the fact that we possess some exceptionally fine children's institutions whose work is of such a high type as to reflect credit not alone upon the institution itself but, likewise, upon the community wherein they operate. The men and women in charge of these orphanages realize fully the responsibilities they have assumed in offering to act *in loco parentis* to the children entrusted to their care, and are measuring up to them. One has but to visit such institutions, pass judgment upon them and come away fully convinced that any child committed to their care, quite generally, will be turned back upon the community well trained, physically, mentally and morally, thoroughly equipped to take his place in society, a proper subject for useful and right citizenship.

Among the congregate institutions visited, despite the fact that they are laboring under serious environmental disadvantages and may never hope to approximate the conditions existing in model cottage orphanages, those in charge of the Good Counsel Training School at White Plains, St. Joseph's Home at Peekskill, the New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum, and the Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum are bending every energy to measure up to the standards of progressive and enlightened child-care. On the other hand, it is a fact that there exist a number of institutions where the methods in operation are of such a low standard as to render them practically incapable of producing results worth while in the advancement of the interests of the children committed to their care. In some institutions of this type the authorities are content to work along the lines of least resistance, extending to their wards the very minimum of requisite care, training, and normal home life. In still another group, the managers cling fondly to traditions and adhere tenaciously to methods of child-care which long ago were thrown into the discard by progressive institutions.

From the standpoint of education and public utility such institutions, apparently, are conducted on a water-tight compartment system in which correlation and unification of all the separate sections of the life and work of the place are sadly lacking. In dealing with such institutions it is absolutely futile to attempt, by way of command, to infuse higher standards and ideals because the very primary and essential elements of proper child-care are totally lacking. Before attempting to introduce newer ideals, a thorough housecleaning would have to be undertaken.

Prior to 1914, when Commissioner Kingsbury came into office, the authorities of the Department of Public Charities, responsible for the commitment of more than twenty thousand dependent children, apparently never had made it their business to learn anything of the results being accomplished by the institutions to which children were committed. Apparently, because these institutions were inspected by the State Board of Charities, it had not been considered any part of the duty of the Commissioner of Charities to consider any distinctive feature of institutional equipment or methods, save that of capacity and the fact that the institution had received the customary certificate from the State Board of Charities.

In justice to Mr. Homer Folks it must be said that, during his term as Commissioner of Charities, he established the custom of securing from the State Board of Charities detailed reports of their inspections of private child-caring institutions, which he forwarded to the superintendents of the children's bureaus responsible for the commitment of children, requesting them to read the reports carefully and to take them into account in selecting the institutions to which they would commit the various children. Mr. Folks often regretted that he did not have a deputy expert in child-care work and a staff sufficient and competent to enable him to inspect these private child-caring institutions.

Commissioner Kingsbury, appreciating the weightiness of the responsibilities inposed upon him, determined to ascertain for himself the character of service maintained in these institutions and the nature of the results obtained. For this purpose he organized an advisory committee on child-caring institutions, composed of Dr. Ludwig B. Bernstein, Dr. R. R. Reeder, and Brother Barnabas, men actively engaged in the conduct of children's institutions and recognized through-

out the country as leading experts in progressive child-caring work. Since its organization it has been my privilege to direct the work of the committee.

With a view to establishing eventually a uniform standard of minimum requirements of proper institutional care of dependent children, the members of this committee have been engaged, during the past year, in conducting an exhaustive study of conditions and methods actually existing in child-caring institutions receiving children by commitment from the Department of Public Charities. In addition, though with little success thus far, an endeavor has been made to ascertain just what actually does become of the children after their discharge from institutions. It is a fact that, with some possible exceptions, very few institutions can give any competent or reliable data concerning their discharged wards.

Thus far the committee has inspected some twenty or more child-caring institutions under private control. As the study still remains incomplete, no reports of the work of the committee have been published. The following, however, is a brief summary of some of the methods and effects of institutional care observed by the members of this advisory committee. In the main, with some few notable exceptions, I am sorry to say it constitutes a woefully pitiful commentary upon the inefficient standards prevailing in some of our institutions of the present day.

In setting forth the results of this study, I have purposely selected for treatment only such matters as are recognized as elementary essentials for the proper conduct of a children's orphanage.

I. Health and Hygiene

(*a*) *Medical Service*

The amount and character of the medical service rendered children varies greatly. In some institutions the attending physician makes a daily visit, while in others the physician calls but once a month; in one institution, caring for more than three hundred children, the attending physician makes a professional visit only when summoned. Among the institutions visited only once each month by the attending physician, one has a census of four hundred children and another a population of more than five hundred. On no institutional staff, thus far visited, is an orthopedic surgeon listed, though the necessity was quite apparent in some institutions. In one institution the Board of Health physicians reported that 64 of the 200 children under care were in need of tonsil operations, yet no record could be found tending to show that any effort had been made by the institutional authorities to remedy this serious condition. Perhaps the explanation will be apparent when it is stated that this institution, thus far, has not perceived the necessity of employing a nose and throat specialist.

(*b*) *Dermatological Service*

Dermatologists were found on very few institutional staffs. In one institution, in which there are housed nearly eight hundred children, 68 were found suffering from various scalp conditions. While these children are segregated in a special cottage, at meal time they are allowed to associate with other children in a general dining room. There is no skin and scalp specialist engaged at this institution.

(*c*) *Eye Service*

The eye service in a number of institutions was found most inadequate. In one institution, where no eye specialist was engaged, it was said that the children's eyes had been examined "about a year ago" and, where necessary, glasses had been supplied. Of course, the glasses, when broken, were not replaced. In another institution, which likewise did not engage an eye specialist, nearly one hundred children were afflicted with various eye troubles for which they were undergoing daily treatment in the infirmary. In this particular instance it was reported that the regular attending physician examined these children about twice a week. Of course it was easily understood why there should be so many cases of children afflicted with sore eyes. They are not segregated and sleep in common dormitories.

(*d*) *Dental Service*

In most institutions, the dental service given is of such an entirely inadequate character that, in the main, it is greatly to be feared as much as harm as good has been done. In a large number of the institutions inspected, the dental equipment provided is very meagre indeed. As a rule, wholesale extractions of teeth apparently is the order of the day. In very few institutions is any attempt made at preventive dental work. It is a fact that in not a single institution thus far visited do the authorities think it worth while to have their dentists, even once a year, cleanse thoroughly the teeth of the children.

(*e*) *Physical Examinations*

Periodical physical examinations of children rarely are made. Save in two of the institutions inspected it is not customary to have the children weighed and measured either upon admission or thereafter. Even where children were found to have been subjected to a physical examination upon entrance to the institution, in a number of instances no provision was made for follow-up work to correct or remedy conditions noted.

(*f*) *Health Reports*

While all institutions are required to report diseases treated to the State Board of Charities, no account is to be found of the use of measures to prevent the recurrence of these diseases, or to remedy the conditions responsible for their spread.

(*g*) *Mental Examinations*

In the majority of the institutions inspected, no systematic effort is made to ascertain the mental condition of the children. Though the Department of Public Charities has established a Clearing House for Mental Defectives where such examinations could be made free of charge, the institutions have made very little use of its facilities.

(*h*) *Institution Hospitals*

In some institutions the facilities for caring for sick children are crude and inadequate. In the hospital wards of a number of institutions, no records of admissions and discharges or of diseases treated could be found. In others, where cases of serious illnesses were treated, bedside records and even clinical thermometers,

apparently, were considered non-essential. In the hospital ward of one institution a child was found seriously ill with pneumonia, yet his temperature was taken only when the physician called. In the infirmary of another institution where comment was made on the absence of records concerning the condition of the patients under care, the attendant replied that she knew the condition of each child and so did the doctor, hence why keep records?

(*i*) *Bathing*

Some institutions have yet failed to grasp the idea that proper and frequent bathing of children is one means of helping to ward off disease. The bathing facilities in some of the institutions are extremely crude and antiquated. In one institution some thirty or more boys are compelled to bathe at one time in a tank three feet deep. On entering the water each child is supplied with a nail brush and a piece of soap which he hands over to his neighbor when leaving the tank, and so the exchange goes merrily on until the last child is bathed. In a number of institutions, children are required to wash their hands but once each day, usually before breakfast, though, in one institution, the custom was reversed and the children went unwashed to the breakfast table. After breakfasting the morning ablution was performed. In some places a common wash cloth was used by a number of children. While individual towels are quite generally supplied in all institutions, the evidences in some cases indicated promiscuous use.

(*j*) *Supply of Toilet Articles*

Individual combs and brushes were found in but few of the institutions visited. For the use of one hundred children in a certain institution visited, only four combs and brushes were supplied. In one institution, in which combs and brushes were viewed as useless impedimenta because the hair of the children was usually clipped, four fine combs constituted the sole supply for nearly three hundred children. When the inspector reported that the heads of the greatest number of these poor children were in a frightfully filthy condition, the cause was not difficult to ascertain. No tooth brushes were supplied for two hundred children in one institution. The person in charge explained their absence by stating that they had been discarded because the children could not be taught to use them. The racks in the bathroom of one institution contained an extra supply of tooth brushes. When the inspector, a trifle surprised, made inquiry concerning the oversupply, she was informed that the tooth brushes of children discharged were disinfected and placed in the racks ready for the use of newcomers.

(*k*) *Food*

An analysis of the dietaries furnished in a number of the institutions showed that, in many instances, the food served was not at all adapted to the needs of growing children and not calculated to develop muscle and bone. Tea and coffee, generally admitted to be harmful to the nervous system undergoing development, were served in a number of institutions, sometimes as frequently as twice a day. Milk is seldom given children in certain institutions. In one institution milk is such a scarce article that it is served only to sick children.

In one institution visited the dinner served to little children consisted of frankfurters, cabbage, and watermelon. In many of the institutions the supper served children usually consists of bread and molasses, or bread and jelly. Cocoa, made with water, is the usual beverage served.

An examination of copies of the menus furnished by certain institutions showed the same combination of food served at meals over and over again. There is little variety from day to day. In general, fruit is provided only on certain festive occasions.

(*l*) *Dining Room and Service*

Though it had been thought that it was quite generally understood that backless seats and benches were injurious to the spine of the growing child, their use is still maintained in the dining rooms of certain institutions. Bare board tables, likewise, are not uncommon; neither are dishes of agate and tinware. The use of table linen and napkins is religiously tabooed in some of the institutions visited. Dreary silence during meal time is compulsory in certain institutions, though in one institution whispering is permitted.

II. Social and Recreational Life of The Child

(*a*) *Clubs and Entertainments*

While literary, dramatic, debating, athletic, and game clubs exist and are encouraged in some institutions, in the majority of the orphanages visited these opportunities so essential for the happiness of the children are conspicuous by their absence. No provision is made to permit the children to exercise initiative in their own affairs, team work is discouraged and no means are employed to develop leadership among the boys and girls.

In most instances meagre provision is made for the entertainment of the children. While certain institutions are notable exceptions to this rule, the majority do not think it should form any part of their curriculum. In one institution the authorities spoke of having provided two or three lectures for the children last year.

(*b*) *Playrooms*

The playrooms, too frequently, were found painfully clean and practically barren save for the presence of a number of backless benches. Dolls and toys usually are brought out upon the scene around Christmas time and sometimes during vacation. In some institutions, while games and toys were said to be supplied the children, they were found new and fresh, securely locked away in closets. In one institution where no games could be discovered the attendant stated that there was a big supply kept in the closet. Of course the closet was locked, but when the inspector insisted upon having it opened the only games found included a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica, some reports of conferences of charities, some sheets of music and old copies of the Saturday Evening Post. The children certainly must have had much enjoyment playing these games.

(c) *Outdoor Playground*

An outdoor playground, fenced in like a chicken coop in some places, with scarcely elbow room for one-half the children compelled to make use of it is surely a dreary place in which to spend so many hours. Yet such obsolete conditions exist in a number of institutions of the present day. The children may feast their eyes upon the green lawns fronting the building but to them is reserved the use of dreary, bleak-looking rear playgrounds, devoid, in many instances, of proper play facilities. While, in one instance, a playground director visits the institution to teach the children folk dancing and to help them in their play, in the majority of the institutions visited no one was found whose business it was to direct the play activities of the children.

(d) *Military Drills*

In some institutions, great stress is laid upon the importance of military drills. Even were it possible to convince one that the children could derive a good deal of fun from these military drills, the frequency of the performance must certainly rob it of the charm of novelty. In addition, it must be hard on the little fellows of eight and nine to march and manoeuvre with boys of fourteen.

(e) *Children's Libraries*

While, in some of the institutions visited, well-stocked libraries of carefully selected children's books were found, very slight attention, in general, was given the subject of providing reading material to the children other than class books. In one institution, caring for more than four hundred children, a trifle more than one hundred volumes were found in the book closet. In another institution of six hundred children, no attempt was made to keep them posted in current events. Magazines, newspapers and school papers are not in general use. As a rule it was found that no competently trained person was charged with the duty of supervising the children's reading.

III. Education

With a few notable exceptions, the schools of most of the institutions inspected are considerably below the standard of good public schools. Many of these institution schools are shut in and completely isolated from the general currents of life and events which flow through the ordinary community and find both expression and interpretation in the public school. Practically out of touch with the world around them, these institution schools feel neither the inspiration nor the competition of a great state or city system of education.

This isolation is emphasized still more by the fact that very few of the institution teachers —it is safe to say not more than one in twenty—visit other schools for observation, study, and inspiration. As a natural consequence, the situation resolves itself into a shut-in school, taught by a shut-in staff. Of such a staff, without touch or competition with other schools, without recognized adequate standards of scholarship and goals and, as frequently is the case, without competent supervision, surely no satisfactory results may be expected.

Teachers, because of these extreme conditions of isolation under which many of them are compelled to work, are quite naturally found far from being abreast

with the modern methods of school room practice and teaching. Methods similar to those in use in a number of these institution schools, such as shouting out the recitations in concert, studying aloud, repeating by rote after the teacher, cramming the memory without ever appealing to or exercising the reasoning faculty of the pupil, even when he has no understanding of what he has "learned by heart" —all these were characteristic of school instruction of a century and more ago. Though it is a hard thing to say, inspections made it evident that scarcely any of the teachers in the institution schools examined have had normal school or professional training. These teachers, for want of proper training, follow practically the methods used by the untrained teachers of their own childhood days, who, in turn, followed those of their early school days. Hence the crude methods of a century ago, before the establishment of training schools for teachers and before books on pedagogy and the science and art of teaching were written, have continued down to the present and are deeply entrenched in the conservatism of these institutions. Like the straw and the bubble riding at anchor along the shore of a great stream, they have kept remote from the broad sweep of human progress which has passed by them unobserved.

Many of the institution schools, thus far inspected, get nowhere in particular with their pupils. The result of the inspections went far to indicate that most institutions merely provided schooling for their wards. In the majority of the schools examined the fact was painfully apparent that no particular aims, goals or standards were set up and efforts made to attain them. There was an utter absence of inducements to secondary or higher education to arouse the ambition of bright or gifted pupils. Apparently the limit upward for all pupils is the end of the elementary course. Children of higher educational promise push their heads against this low roof in vain. It was not surprising to find that, as a natural result of such conditions, a very large percentage of retardation existed among institution pupils. In many of the class rooms inspected more than half the pupils were found over age for their grade. While, perhaps, it may be true that many of the pupils, because of poverty, misfortune, and adverse family home conditions, are already retarded when they enter the institution, yet, after making all due allowances for these, it has been demonstrated that there is a great increase in retardation after admission to the institution, and, as has been found, many of the children retarded have spent practically all of their school life in the institution.

It will be granted, I think, that every institution caring for a hundred or more children, retaining them as wards until from fourteen to sixteen years of age, should have a number of high school pupils. Unfortunately however not one institution in ten of these caring for several hundred wards each, sends any pupils to the high school. In one institution school the reason given for not promoting pupils was lack of class room accommodations in the higher grades. These upper grades therefore, were sitting on the heads of those below, holding them down until older pupils were discharged to make room for their promotion. This form of cruelty is as real as that of stunting the physical growth of the child by underfeeding or limiting his stature by a Procrustean bedstead. It can only result in both individual and social waste. Instead of helping to eliminate it tends, in great measure, to repeat the dreary round of dependency in succeeding generations.

IV. Vocational Training

With respect to vocational training, while a few are exerting splendid efforts in this direction, the larger number of the institutions inspected showed a lack of proper understanding of the real meaning of the term vocational training. In most instances the equipment provided is distinctly primitive and the instruction crude and valueless. In but few institutions did there exist any clearly defined policy to outline and govern a systematic and progressive course of instruction. As a rule the work carried on under the guise of vocational training, was purely utilitarian in character, lacking even the very elementary essentials of real vocational training. In very few instances was it found that the bulk of the boys and girls over the age of twelve years were receiving the benefits of a well-balanced vocational course. Compared with the total number of children in the care of institutions, the proportion receiving vocational instruction was insignificant. Relatively, a very small number of the girls receive instruction in sewing, millinery, embroidery, and domestic science. The number of boys receiving instruction in woodwork is very, very small. In one institution the teacher in charge of the vocational training was originally the institution's tailor. Now he is engaged as instructor in shoemaking and woodwork. In this institution only five boys receive instruction in woodwork and in the shoeshop, whereas twenty-eight, eighteen of whom are little chaps, ten or eleven years old, were found working in the tailor shop.

Child Labor

In certain institutions for the care of girls what was termed vocational training practically amounted to exploiting and overworking children who had no redress. Try to conceive of a girl being compelled to go to work at a wash tub at five o'clock in the morning there to remain until the dinner bell sounded at noon when respite was had, and have such procedure styled "vocational training!" Yet such was actually the condition found existing in one institution, the managers of which roundly scored me as drastic and over-oppressive because I dared to brand their so-called "home" as worse than a penal institution.

In another institution the authorities were strongly directed to abolish immediately the deplorable practice of exacting cheap labor from a group of defenceless girls, fourteen years of age and over, who were found rendering from eight to nine hours of hard service, with no compensation whatever. It was pointed out very plainly that, under no circumstances, could the board and lodging received by these girls at the hands of the institutional authorities be considered a *quid pro quo* for the labor and service rendered. If the service these girls were compelled to render had in it any real educational value it would not be so objectionable; but to keep girls of fourteen years of age busy carrying clothes from the laundry to the linen room, scarcely could be said to constitute a proper preparation for after life.

In still another institution girls, from fourteen to sixteen years of age, receive scholastic training to the extent of two hours a day. The balance of the day is spent by them in assisting with the industries of the institution. In this institution no outside help is employed. The girls do all the work, some of whom, in return, receive a small remuneration varying from five to eight dollars a month. In some few exceptional cases, ten dollars a month was paid.

In a number of institutions girls who have reached the age of fourteen years are immediately put to work at institution industries. The only education they receive is an hour's instruction in the evening after a day of hard work. In many cases, these girls are obliged to go to work as early as six o'clock in the morning. Some of them are compelled to work in laundries where the heat is intolerable. In the majority of cases, though they work from eight to nine hours a day, very few receive any compensation.

V. After-Care

In but few institutions is any definite and systematic after-care work conducted. While a certain group of institutions refer the names of children discharged to a central agency which undertakes their supervision, in a large number of the institutions inspected the ties are severed between the orphanage and its wards once they have been discharged.

With some few notable exceptions, very little attempt has been made, as yet, to organize discharged boys and girls into alumni organizations. The superintendent of one institution declared that she did not believe in the establishment of such organizations as the children wanted to forget the institution entirely and did not want their new-made friends to know they had been inmates. No doubt the children of this particular institution had every reason to try to forget this experience of their childhood days.

A few alumni organizations, however, do exist and have been especially helpful in securing positions for boys and girls about to be discharged from particular institutions.

Deductions and Conclusions

In the preceding paragraphs an endeavor has been made to put before you a faithfully drawn picture of the conditions and methods actually maintained in a certain group of children's institutions of the present day. While not specifically stated, the probable resultant influences of such systems of child-care are quite clearly indicated. The picture, by no means highly colored or overdrawn, is an exact portrayal of facts, very readily substantiated, gathered as the result of a serious and unprejudiced study on the part of men who, while recognized as experts in their chosen profession, are not theorists but superintendents actively engaged daily in the management of children's institutions. These men are widely known throughout the country for the intensity of their interest in any movement which has in it capabilities for improving and advancing the work of this specialized form of child-care in which they are engaged.

The facts set forth in this paper are not of an isolated character, but fairly typical and representative of the methods employed in a number of institutions. That these same facts are the result of observations of men recognized as leaders in the conduct of the work of children's institutions, should serve to make their reliability and acceptance stand without question.

Having endeavored to cite the concrete facts, it is possible, as outlined in the

opening paragraphs of this paper, to make deductions and to draw conclusions as to what, in all likelihood, will be the probable results of the sort of institutional care we have portrayed. In all this, however, the fact is not overlooked that, in opposition, there may be cited the cases of some brilliant exceptions. However, when carefully studied, it will ordinarily be found that, when compared with the large number of discharged wards of whom absolutely nothing is known, the number of such exceptions is not entirely representative. It is true that a number of men and women, former wards of institutions, because of some inherent ability have been able to overcome the handicaps of their institutional days and have become powerful and influential factors in the community. In their careers, however, may they not have demonstrated, that after all, there is much truth in the theory of the "survival of the fittest?"

In this very brief outline of some of the observations of the members of the advisory committee on child-caring institutions of the Department of Public Charities of the City of New York, I think it will be conceded that it has been established:

I. That the type of children's institutions and the character of service rendered by them to the little ones entrusted to their care, varies greatly.

Probable Result: Good institutions, indifferent institutions, and decidedly bad and useless institutions.

II. Children, in a number of institutions, are not receiving adequate medical, surgical, and dental service. Periodical physical examinations of children are not generally made.

Probable Result: At least a certain number of institutional children undoubtedly will be turned back upon the community physically defective and, as a result, seriously handicapped to begin the struggle for a livelihood.

III. A number of children's institutions fail to provide a sufficient amount of nourishing food to develop bone and muscle among their children.

Probable Result: Children are sent forth from these institutions undernourished and impoverished, physically incapable of standing the strain coincident with their battle for existence.

IV. In a large number of institutions leadership among the children is absolutely discouraged and very little opportunity afforded the boys and girls to exercise their powers of initiative and independence of thought.

Probable Result: The children, discharged from the institution, are started in life utterly lacking in individuality, possess a very limited degree of self-reliance and have become practically unfitted to work independently. Their inability to fit in with the new conditions in which they find themselves not infrequently lead to discouragement and the development of a strong tendency to abandon the struggle and join the ranks of the submerged.

V. The play and recreational facilities afforded children in many institutions are utterly inadequate. As a consequence the children are given little opportunity to exercise their freedom and play sense, so essential in the development of the normal child.

Probable Result: A disgruntled and improperly developed boy or girl.

VI. In many institutions there is an utter absence of home atmosphere and home training.

Probable Result: The boys and girls, brought up in an artificial atmosphere, are for the most part totally unprepared to adapt themselves to the customs maintaining in the ordinary normal family home. As a consequence, in growing manhood and womanhood, they are frequently put to shame because of lack of proper training in their early childhood days.

VII. The education given children in most institution schools is utterly inadequate and much below the standard obtaining in the public school system.

Probable Result: Children are discharged sadly lacking in proper educational equipment. Because of this serious handicap, unless sufficiently ambitious to take steps to better themselves they will usually be found incapable of obtaining other than unskilled positions.

VIII. Very little vocational or pre-vocational training of any constructive value is given in a number of children's institutions.

Probable Result: Children discharged from such institutions are left to their own resources in the choice of a vocation. Not properly educated or trained along any given line, their choice is very limited indeed. The girls, usually, fail to rise above the class of domestic servants.

IX. In some institutions the authorities actuated, it would appear, solely from motives of cheap economy, compel the children, especially girls, to remain too long in the orphanage in order to use them in carrying on institution industries of no value whatever in helping to equip them for future useful lives.

Probable Result: The children's future is sacrificed. As a rule, when discharged, such children find themselves utterly incapable to cope with changed conditions. Not infrequently they drift into the failure column.

X. Many institutions never have perceived the necessity of establishing an after-care department to look after the interests of their discharged wards. Even in some institutions where a certain form of after-care is in operation, its value is problematical.

Probable Result: A large number of failures of which the institution has no knowledge.

XI. Some institutions have no faith in alumni organizations, laboring under the impression that, once the boy or girl is discharged, the work of the institution is completed.

Probable Result: A number of young men and women who have joined the down and out class simply because, entirely friendless, they had no one upon whom to call for counsel and advice.

Responsibility for Conditions

It is a recognized axiom that every effect is due to some definite cause or causes. To what causes, then, may be attributed much of this spirit of conservatism and unprogressiveness in methods maintaining in a number of our children's institutions? Who is responsible for the continuance of antiquated methods of child-care and this utter lack of adequate and reliable data concerning the subject of what actually does become of children discharged from institutions?

Those who have given any thought to the subject are pretty much agreed that there are three distinct contributing causes operating to keep a large proportion of these children's institutions from reaching a high level in accomplishing results worth while.

First, it has been made apparent that the institutions themselves are at fault because those responsible for their conduct, failing to realize the serious consequences of their neglect, have been contented to work along the lines of least resistance, making very feeble attempts, if any at all, to adopt elementary measures which are necessary to the natural development of children. These private child-caring institutions are substantially self-governing corporations having it in their power at any time to change methods and policy. While the direct responsibility for failure to measure up to modern requirements must rest upon the boards of managers of these institutions, experience shows that a board of managers of a children's institution is apt to make a move in the right direction only when it is far-seeing and fortunate enough to secure a thoroughly competent executive who is likewise an educator. The history of the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society of New York shows what a trained educator can do in this respect. Formerly the authorities of this institution conducted an obsolete overcrowded congregate plant in the heart of the city. A few years ago the board of managers disposed of the city plant and removed to the country where there is now conducted a thoroughly modern, well-equipped, and progressive cottage orphanage, one of the best of its type in the country. If only it would, every institution could do likewise. No institution can expect to make progress unless it recognizes that child-care work is a highly specialized profession and that the man or woman selected as the executive must be a person of proved capabilities.

The institutions consider themselves as agencies primarily for the support of children and intended to tide them over the period of childhood. They have not realized that their primary purpose should be to educate and train for life and that because their wards as a rule are exceptionally difficult to train they need exceptionally high grade officers and teachers.

In the second place, the committing authorities of the City of New York have served as a contributing cause in that, apparently, they have never looked upon the problem as of sufficient moment to make it any part of their business to formulate and promulgate any competent standard to govern the service maintained in children's institutions. The service being utterly lax in this respect, the appropriating authorities of this city have no measure upon which to base their estimate of the appropriations needed to maintain these standards.

The third contributing cause is the State Board of Charities. By virtue of the power vested in it by the constitution and the law, the State Board of Charities had, for years, been charged with the duty of inspecting child-caring institutions. In its power to make rules regulating the admission and discharge of inmates, the State Board of Charities could enforce the adoption of its suggestions. Armed with ample authority, it had it in its power to compel children's institutions to put into effective operation proper and adequate standards for the care and training of dependent children.

The inspections thus far made by the advisory committee of the Department of

Public Charities clearly indicate that either the inspectors of the State Board of Charities charged with examining the methods of child-caring institutions or their directing officers are not thoroughly posted and alive to the changes constantly being made in progressive child-caring institutions, or else they have failed to grasp any proper concept of the modern acceptation of what is adequate institutional care of dependent children.

The plan of inspection certainly must be defective which, while it lays so much stress upon each child having a two-foot space around his bed, fails to insist that he be given at least elbow room in the playground. The plan is defective which insists upon ample fire protection being provided but does not insist, with equal force, upon adequate medical and physical protection being accorded the inmates.

Of course, to those intimately acquainted with the subject, this failure of the State Board of Charities to produce results in its inspections is quite readily understood. If in its work of inspections the State Board had the expert service and advice of trained institutional superintendents, progress undoubtedly would have resulted.

Financial Responsibility

Some may contend, as does the State Board, that the city does not pay these private child-caring institutions a sufficient compensation to permit them to measure up to the requirement. While this, perhaps, may be true when applied to some institutions, the sort of care and training given the children in others, measured in dollars and cents, is scarcely worth the price the city pays for it. In certain of these institutions neither the city, practically supporting it, nor the children are given a square deal.

It should not be forgotten that the financial responsibility under the existing system is assumed in part by the institution itself. The institution is expected, as its part of the program, to provide the buildings and equipment. It is manifestly improper, as it would also be illegal, for the city to appropriate funds to these institutions for real estate and buildings which would thereupon become the property, not of the city, but of the institutions. It is up to the institutions to secure the funds wherewith to provide themselves with modern equipment or, if they can not do this, to admit it and retire from the field. Many of them own real estate of great value in the city, probably quite sufficient, if they would give the matter careful thought, to secure country sites and build cottage institutions. Furthermore it is also not to be assumed that the city is to bear the full cost of maintenance. One of the arguments advanced for the system of co-operation with private institutions is that private charity will do its part and will supplement the city appropriations. Some institutions do this to a very notable extent. On the other hand a considerable number of institutions rely almost wholly, if not wholly, upon city grants. It is to be noted, furthermore, that a very large number of the defects pointed out above are not related primarily, if at all, to the question of funds, but deal rather with the attitude, spirit, and underlying purpose of the institutions. If there were the will to improve the way could be found, and many of the improvements could be made without additional expense, or at least with very little additional expense.

The picture herein drawn is not at all inviting and constitutes rather a sad commentary upon the efficiency of some of our New York institutions. Yet the picture, dark as it may be, has its bright side and already, under the impetus of the inspections made by the Department's advisory committee there is a healthy and most promising re-awakening all along the line. Proper social vision of the welfare of dependent children, on the part of both staff and institution management, gradually is replacing the gloom and haze of dreary decades of barren institutionalism.

NOTE.—Copies of the Questionnaire, or Plan of Inspection, used by the Department of Public Charities in the inspection of children's institutions may be had upon application to

WILLIAM J. DOHERTY, *Second Deputy Commissioner*,
Department of Public Charities,
Municipal Building, New York City.

MSH 22662

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TITLE